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Fig. 17. Pangwe Village, Spanish Guinea.

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344 and followers who help him with its construction and have a permanent right to its use; /58/ /Fig. 18/ hence, the relational prefix a in abā́, "meeting house"; hence probably also the Janus head which I saw on the post of a meeting house (cf. Fig. 19). The stem of the word a-bā́ I derive from ba, "to divide, to share" (1), and I

> 1. The same stem exists in the numeral two (bai), which is clearly the result of the division of one object.

believe that it was originally intended to designate the place where the game that had been killed was divided. The meeting house is now the place for all public transactions, from the dividing of meat to judicial proceedings, public deliberations, and the reception of strangers.

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344 Sometimes the meeting house constructed when the establishment was founded remains permanently in a temporary state; it remains unfinished because the people are too lazy -- each one thinks the other should start first -- and the chief lacks the power

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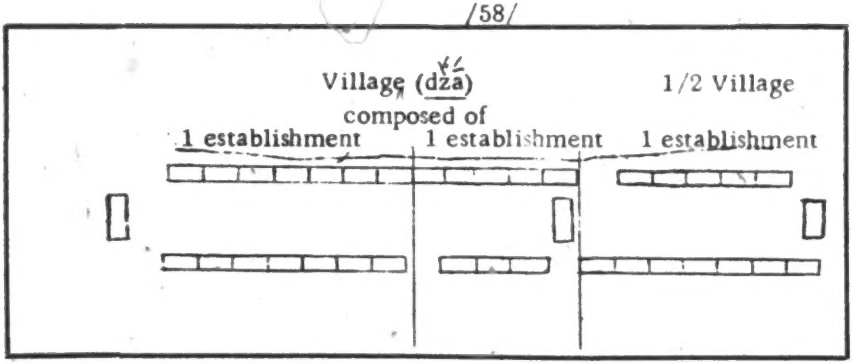


Fig. 18. Development of a Village from Individual Establishments.

to force his people to complete it. At one time, for instance, the chief of the village Nssälang (Fig. 23 shows one of the temporary meeting houses of that village) made the proposal to me -- a proposal which I, of course, gratefully declined -- that I should either force his people, or make my people available, to build a new meeting house for him. Then, as he put it, everybody would say: "This chief of the Whites is quite a fellow; you can tell that a White lives near his village." At best, the chief's people bring him some roofing mats for the construction and in this way believe they have fulfilled their duty toward the community project. The actual work is always up to the chief. Even so, the house does not thereby become his property; rather, in each case it is the common property of the men. When the chief says, "It is my meeting house," they are not affected by his statement. The Pangwe avoids anything and everything that might disturb him in his customary peace and comfort; he shies away from work and lets things run their course:

zó[k] e tsídan ebēi-asē'i, a ye oa
Elephant, he frightened away (from) pit-iron-stone, he gave you

atēi, a nī oa adzīt
poverty, he took (from) you heaviness. /59/

That means: The elephant that frightened you away from an iron-stone pit, made you poor, it is true, but at the same time he relieved you of a burden (namely, that of preparing the iron).

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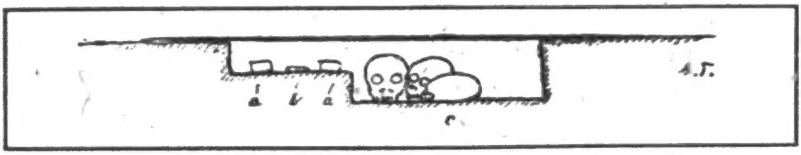

Fig. 53. Underground Chamber of a Mekuk Sorcerer, Cross-section.
(a) Circle made of plantain pieces, (b) magic medicines, (c) skulls of murdered relatives.

the Mekuk man's house companions in their sleep, so that they wake up the next day completely beaten up. They are also supposed to steal money and goods in order to take them to the Mekuk man. In short, the Mekuk stories remind one of the experiences of the man who wanted to learn to be afraid /Ed., in one of Grimm's fairy tales/.

777 Other medicines for wealth that utilize the power of the souls are more innocent; they do not require the murder of relatives nor care of the skulls. Instead, their powers are derived from the
[824] habitation of the souls, the Copaifera tessmannii Harms (ovǒn). The Mekuk skulls must be included only in the event the medicine man already possesses some. The procedure as a rule is as follows. The father of the person concerned goes with a medicine man, /152/ and both clear an area under a large Copaifera. Then a leaf vessel filled with water is set up, and into this some of the bark of the
[801] Copaifera is scraped nine times (three times three); furthermore a stone from the stomach of the crocodile is placed in it if one is available. A peculiar test of the worthiness of the young man is now given. Various objects are placed together in three piles: on
[415] the first are placed steamed cassava (women's food) and a basket
[887] (ebā́dă) carried only by old women because it has a small capacity; on the second, a rifle, a bundle of vegetables (ngon) with fish, brass ornaments, cowrie shells, and a piece of cloth, all of which are things that delight young people; on the third pile is placed
[293] a fly swatter (implement of the chiefs), a foot ring made of ivory,
[622] and a boiled chicken, in other words, such things as are allotted to chiefs. Now the young man is brought to the piles. "If he has sense," he will go to the last pile and consume the chicken. In this

585 After the wedding, the young bride is allowed a certain period
595 of rest (up to one month), during which she does not need to work. Every day, newly painted with red wood, she struts around the village. After this honeymoon she then proceeds to the diurnal work in the field, while the man may possibly already be on the lookout for a second wife. Incidentally, there are not many who can afford the luxury of several wives; usually these are only the chief, his brothers, and a number of other people. The great majority must content themselves with a single wife. In former
[589] times there were even people who, for lack of money, were condemned to permanent bachelorhood because the opportunities for earning money were not as favorable as they are today with European commerce. In the account of the belief in souls (Vol. II, p. 102 /Ed., not translated/), we mentioned how a loving father procures a wife for his son by transforming himself into a leopard.

622 The number of wives that the individual chief calls his own
595 decreases from north to south, precisely in the same proportion as his power as a ruler decreases towards the south. The most
184 respected and greatest chiefs of the Mwele and Jaunde sometimes possess up to 100 wives; similarly, Bulu chiefs with 50 wives are not a rarity. Among the Fang, on the other hand, the chiefs have only from 16 to 20 wives, at most 30, while in smaller villages they may have as few as five or even fewer, since, as we have seen /Ed., not translated/, anybody can become a chief (nkūkūma) by founding a new village because in this village he will be the "wealthiest."

837 The statement sounds harsh, but it must be made: the woman's sexual life is basically a continuation of that of the girl, perhaps in even more artful forms, in other words, a higher form of prostitution. Marital fidelity is a great rarity, even though my Blacks steadfastly maintained that this is not so. I myself was only once shown a woman, as a "curiosity," who did not permit herself to be seduced by other men, and this was not even in the Pangwe region, but on my travels in Bassá country. I do not wish to deny that even among the Pangwe there are women who remain faithful to their husbands without being compelled

837 to do so, but, as I said -- white crows! Actually, it would be asking rather a lot to expect this as the order of the day, in view of the prevailing polygyny. All jealousy and all supervision are of no avail; the women simply acquire behind the man's back what he cannot or will not grant them.

[622] [595] Generally, the chief keeps only a small number of his wives, perhaps from three to five, for himself. The others he divides among his /263/ adherents and friends or hires them out to acquaintances for one or more nights in exchange for cash payment. In addition, as is apparent from the reckonings at the feast for the souls, the women keep a whole series of admirers who -- if there is no other way -- satisfy them during the day in the fields, in spite of Ngi and all the cult spirits. Even lepers and cripples are not spurned if they are capable sexually. If the [684] husband learns the name of a wife's lover, the latter must pay him about 300 spears. The price fluctuates somewhat, and in case the parties do not come to an agreement, it is determined by legal proceedings. If the husband catches a rival in flagrante delicto, he sometimes has no scruples about shooting him down on the spot.

587 If a woman dies soon after marriage, the widower obtains the sister of the deceased as a wife, either for nothing or for a small additional payment, because it is believed that the woman carried an ewu inside her, in other words, that she was a sorceress and was therefore responsible for her own death, thus wronging her husband.

586 If for some reason or other a man does not like his wife, he can give her back without great difficulty, since, after all, she retains her value and finally always "gets her man." In the case of young people, who frequently marry the first person that happens to be available and only later realize what they have actually acquired, wives may be taken back purely if they have a poor appearance, diseased teeth, an evil smell, and so forth, in other words, if they are generally "unpleasant."

Otherwise, the chief grounds for divorce are: 1) spitefulness and disobedience towards the spouse; 2) malicious, extended desertion of the husband (but not simple running away) and

621 all future progress to the extent to which it allows (or does not allow)
571 the maintenance of sufficiently large and stable village units.
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Political Authority and Judicial Authority

554 Taking Fang society as an example, Dr. Cureau speaks of
622 "a phenomenon of a stretching ... of the social bloc into a hierarchy based either on filiation or on intellectual and particularly moral superiority, both of which principles have their practical value according to the times." (1) He insists on a fact we have

1. Work already quoted, p. 332.

pointed out, the lack of a hierarchical organization, [with only]
[196] the simple existence of pre-eminences. The language itself gives proof of this fact by not having a special word to designate the chief, using ésa when the pre-eminence is in a way genealogical, nkuma when it is based on wealth, ẑoé (from ẑu, to say) when it justified by eloquence and the ability to command. By magnifying this statement, A. Cureau contrasts the Fang groupings with those of other peoples as being "anarchical tribes" as opposed to "organized tribes." He writes: "Authority is occasional and momentary ... Edvoughe has carried the votes in such-and-such a difficult palaver, the whole assembly obeys for a moment this ephemeral chief; tomorrow Nzokh will have succeeded Edvoughe in the leadership of opinion; here then the struggle against one and all takes place between constantly changing and constantly renewed contestants." (2)

2. Ibid., p. 326.

In a similar sense the informants of the Commission for [137] Historical Investigation assert that the chief was "in a word the one from whom the community expected the greatest services." (1)

1. Official report of the fifth session.

In the same vein there are continual complaints from administrators incapable of reviving the powerful traditional chefferies and of acting through their medium.

554 622 769 It should be noted, however, that pre-eminence "based on filiation," as Cureau puts it, is maintained without too much difficulty – being durable while power born of events is temporary – so long as the worship of ancestors by each clan fragment remains in force. Seniority determines this pre-eminence, justified and made effective by the possession of the basket containing the ancestors' skulls. This power of the "eldest," who is at the same time "first among his equals" and priest of the biéri cult organized within the cadre of "kinship," has not however allowed the implantation of effective chefferies comparable to those based on the same principles in the Ba-kongo country (2).

2. Cf., Third part of this work.

An early government report stressed the fact that one became chief, specifying that the nyamòrò (eldest) "became chief in his zone of influence when his fairness and the effectiveness of his power were recognized." (3) Thus neither the villages nor the

3. Customs regulating the attributes of chiefs and their designation in Rapport politique du Djouah [Political Report of Djouah], 1938.

localized clan fragments, nor still less the extended clan and the tribe, reveal the existence of a true hierarchy. We see the pre-eminence of the ésa (which may only be shown by some deferential attitudes) or the provisional pre-eminence of a man who has known how to expand his "zone of influence."

554 622 [7] What are the reasons for such a situation? Taking as an example Ba-kongo, which will be studied later, one sees that the fundamental social relationship is that which exists between the ancestors (masters and guardians of the sod), the land, and the lineage; it implies necessary relations between related lineages and limits the mobility of groupings. There is nothing like this in the Fang country, where the relation with land has no such importance and the whole economy, until very recently, remained oriented toward warlike and economic conquest. Even in the

554 regions where the Fang population seems relatively old, instability
622 is the rule for a large proportion of the groupings. There is thus a sort of vicious circle: mobility imposed by long-range conquest has prevented the [138] establishment of a hierarchical organization and this "lack" results in an unrestrained instability.

The social system does not show any elements favorable to a better hierarchical organization. While the pre-eminence of the eldest is accepted, that of the eldest lineage (from which, among the Ba-kongo, the "crowned chief" is selected) is barely maintained. On the contrary, we have shown that there is a nearly constant tension between this lineage and those of the "younger"
[567] brothers. On the other hand, the absence of domestic slavery indicates the wish to prevent any development of inequality. During
[727] the entire period of great conquests the Fang have had only two solutions in relation to conquered foreigners: to destroy or to adopt. And while the eldest appears to be the regulator of the economic and political life, and to be responsible for the worship of the ancestors, his authority is subject to an effective control. It counts only within the framework of groupings of limited extent. It is open to the criticism of the men of the nd'è bòt (who consider themselves the equal of the eldest who only acts "by delegation") or of the council members when the village contains several minor lineages. It also remains in competition with occasional authorities.

If it is true that seniority almost automatically creates authority, this authority is also limited and often threatened by the principle that "the most capable" is the most influential. In the fairly large villages, the position of chief (one should rather say the regulator and intermediary with foreign groupings, which the word ntòl specifically means) is generally passed on from eldest son to eldest son (or, in default, from eldest [son] to a younger brother on the same segment) in the lineage descended from the founder. This is on condition that the successor is approved by all "for his bravery, his wealth, and his eloquence." (1) In the opposite case, a stronger

1. L. Mba, Coutumier Pahouin [Pahouin Customs], p. 12.

personality is chosen from among the eldest of another nd'è bòt in the village. In other respects this authority is controlled by a council

554 representing not simply the various minor lineages but open to
622 competitive authorities – the best warrior (éyènö), a rich man (nkuma), the cleverest at settling palavers (nté bété), not to mention the dignitaries of the "associations." In the traditional society, the possession of the biéri basket established the right of the eldest's pre-eminence and gave this right a sacred basis [139] it was a partial guarantee against the struggles for prestige. With the disappearance of this cult under the influence of the colonizers, the eldest must use the new "associations" or must make himself feared by having recourse to techniques of a magical order; otherwise he will find himself threatened as "chief" at the time of a competition which is implied by the Fang social logic.

554 The role of personal prestige appears clearly in studying the vocabulary, which has a considerable number of words or expressions applicable to the "important" or "honored" man: éguma (from gum, to honor), muramo(r) (t) and fâm ndên (from mura and ndên, great or important), nkurödi (very important man), mfum (well-known man, who has many relations), nkuma (already quoted, a man who is influential because of his wealth), etc. The authority acquired by such prestige limits the essential authority which we have shown to be dependent on seniority, but tradition also imposes strict restraints on it as well. Any pre-eminence acquired by virtue of purely personal merit is dangerous for the one who holds it, for it is essential that power, wealth, and wisdom be placed at the service of all members of the grouping.

554 Many early authors have pointed out the risk of displaying
578 an affluence and a prosperity that are not shared. Le Testu emphasizes the role played by "the fear of exciting jealousy": "Larger and more successful plantations, a better hut, wives that are more fertile, more prosperous affairs... each is a cause for jealousy, and the consequence of this feeling, as is often believed to be true, is the death of the one who excites it ...." (1) Similarly, M.

1. Le Testu, Le N'gwéna [The N'gwéna], Bulletin de la Société des Recherches Congolaises, Vol. 12, 1930.

level that the agencies of authority, of social control, are most in evidence.

The head of the family is the senior, ntôl or ntôle môt, of the adult and active men, benya bôtô, "the true men." He is not necessarily the oldest in age, because infirm old men suffer a genuine capitis diminutio /a loss of status/. The founder of the hamlet or his eldest son can still, even if infirm, preserve a certain moral authority as father, ésa, of the family, but actual authority will then be delegated to a nya môtô chosen from his brothers, sons, or nephews, the éfo'olo (Bertaut). In principle, a jal is composed of the founder, his old relatives /parents/, his younger brothers, his children and those of his sisters, his unmarried sisters, their illegitimate children and those of his daughters. Wives do not belong to the jal; their village is referred to as jañ. Of a divorced woman one would say, a keya jañ, "she has gone back to her village." The size of the nda bôt depends upon different factors: security, the /family/ head's authority, the fertility of the soil, etc. I have already pointed out how several mal can be gathered into a nlam, a proper village. Nowadays the menda me bôt are tending to decrease numerically and no longer to correspond to the jal, which can from now on combine several /menda me bôt/. The limited or household family is becoming more and more important, while the government-sponsored institution of village chiefship /chefferie/, although it is often only an imperfect substitute for the authority of the ntôl or the ésa, undermines that none the less. The size of an average nda bôt may be calculated at twenty /49/ persons (including the wives who do not belong to the jal), less in the towns and among the less prosperous people, more among large planters and the influential (minkukum).

The nda bôt used to be a religious, military, and economic unit. On the religious plane, the father, ésa, was the custodian of the biéti (Fang, biéri), the portable altar or ark of the ancestral cult containing the skulls of the ancestors; he made the decisions about initiations and bore their expense. The initiations have died out, and the missions have burned dozens, if not hundreds, of biéri. Security and colonial order have removed any interest in the ésa's military function. Only his economic role survives to some extent. He used to be the sole owner of the family goods (biôm), sole treasurer of income, and sole regulator of expenditures, of which the most important was the payment of "bride prices" (minsuba) for his younger brothers and his

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551 connection that the points of the compass have a sexual implication,
565 which is not well understood. The bilaba sets up a sort of joking re-
623 lationship between the families of the participants, which may con-
631 tinue after their death.

The institution seems to be dying out, though it was still flourishing between the two /World?/ wars and often involved considerable amounts of money (1).

> 1. Balandier (no. 175 and in a personal communication) stresses the economic importance of the bilaba which, in a society without a money or trade economy, constituted one of the principal means of circulating goods and, especially, of diffusing imported commodities.

556 In spite of the fear his success inspires, and perhaps because of
602 this fear, the rich man enjoyed undoubted authority in his village
● and sometimes beyond it. Nkukuma, the absolute form of nkukum, is used to translate "chief" (it probably means, more precisely, "person of note").

554 The word évet, also applied to subchiefs or government "capitas"
622 is likewise used —a correct nuance if, as Bates says, évet is a corruption of headman applied originally to the chiefs of trade caravans. These men were chosen for their business astuteness, diplomacy, authority, and courage, but they were only deputies of a clan or village, not true political chiefs. To convey the latter implication the preferable term is still njôô bôt (Fang, nzoé mur) from jô = to say, to command; a term indicating a de facto state, /état de fait/ rather than a legal notion. It should be recalled that there were no political leaders other than the seniors, mintôl, of the extended families. Their authority was further limited by the ease with which their brothers could leave the village to establish another nearby (2).

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> 2. But among some Pahouinized peoples the existence of royal insignia shows that chiefship /chefferie/ is an institution: among the Ewôndo and Yanda the head of the clan designated his successor or, if he

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had not done so, the clan chose its chief, and the neighboring populations each sent him a spear in token of recognition.

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The power of the Fong chief is on an even more personal level. The chief conveys his commands by means of an enormous drum; his pipe is preserved like a relic; his musicians play special instruments, among them the nkeñ (percussion double bell), quite rare in that region but a classical instrument in the western Cameroons with the Bamiléké or Bamoum /Mum/. The chief's installation is marked by the tradition of the spears and the donning of a headpiece of parrot plumes. (J. B.)

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Any more extensive authority was founded on personal prestige, which always aroused resentment. Authority was never conferred except temporarily, and it was quite often withdrawn from the holder before term.

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French, German, and Spanish administrations have attempted to set up a hierarchical system of authority that it has never been possible really to impose upon the country. The three administrations all made the initial mistake of trying to establish this authority on a territorial basis, which is completely—or nearly—foreign to these nomadic people. Only village chiefship had some resemblance to a customary institution, provided that the choice of chief fell upon a ntôl môt, a genuine senior, and that his brothers accepted his authority. Canton and higher chiefdoms had no cohesion except insofar as the incumbent had authority or administrative support. At the beginning of the colonial period, however, these functions were very often entrusted to genuine bejôô bôt, /62/ well-known war chiefs, high initiates of societies like the ngil, or celebrated magicians. Later on, it became more difficult to find, even among opposition ranks, chiefs possessed of real authority. After 1945 there was an attempt in the Cameroons to reorganize the system of authority on a clan basis (the Bourdier-Granier reform), then on village lines (the Christol system), finally ending up with a municipal type of system.

Next, the establishment of urban and rural municipal councils permits financial decentralization. Towns under the term "urban communes," cantons, and sometimes whole subdivisions under the term "rural communes," received a legal character, with a domain to manage and a budget to fix. Elected councilors under an appointed mayor had to study plans for road works, to set up construction or maintenance programs, inquire into taxes? /taxes/ and assessments /impôts/, and have an eye to a sound financial position.

In towns this was nothing new, but its extension to wide rural areas was an experiment. Boulou or Beti country, where there was no risk of these new methods giving offense to a strong traditional /social/ structure, was the ideal place for trying out a new /kind of/ organization.

Throughout the elections arranged to fill the posts of councilor, we can see crystallizing the most striking traits of the new élite, the characteristics of the aristocracy or oligarchy that will get itself into power.

Pessimists had expressed fear that such elections, based on almost universal suffrage, would overthrow the classical social values and impair the prestige of the present acting élite.

This point of view disregarded the fact that in a country practically without stratification, no one can keep authority without the support of public opinion. /132/ Granting the vote to vassals in a feudal society may unsettle the power of the nobility. It is quite otherwise here, where chiefs of village or canton are most commonly chosen by election.

The older men have preserved a privileged position vis-à-vis the younger generation. A comparison of the age pyramid of councilors with that of the adult male population as a whole readily shows this: (table on following page).

The younger generation is poorly represented. Mature men of thirty to forty are represented in proportion to their ratio in the total population; but men of forty to fifty or of the older age group are heavily represented. Electoral influence has not been seized by the younger men.

Neither does it appear that the poorer class, more numerous than the rich, has benefited from the ballot so as to eliminate the latter. From the point of view of the possession of a certain amount of wealth, we can assert that municipal councilors are much better off than the common people.

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Distribution by Age

| Age Group | Elected Municipal Councilors | Total Adult Male Population (1) (Nyong-and-Sanaga) |
|---|---|---|
| | Percent | Percent |
| 20 to 30 years | 9 | 26 |
| 30 to 40 | 33 | 29 |
| 40 to 50 | 37 | 28 |
| Over 50 | 20 | 15 |

1. Evaluation made according to censuses established by the subdivisions; the documentation is not faultless but nevertheless is indicative.

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The figures given below for the whole population are not definitive, but as they have been taken from a recent complete census they may be considered good approximations.

Distribution of External Signs of Wealth
(for 100 persons)

| | Masonry Houses | Bicycles | Automobiles |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Percent | Percent | Percent |
| Municipal councilors | 27 | 50 | 11 |
| Adult male population of Ebolowa | 1.4 | 21 | 0.3 |

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Not for nothing do the Pahouin use the word nkukuma (rich) to designate a chief. The chosen leaders are the rich men. /133/

A study of the matrimonial situation enables us to be more specific about the personal characteristics of elected men. Polygamy is much more common among them than among the population as a whole.

884 779 411 The young man is armed. He has undergone the initiation of the bawu and henceforth he has a right to speak in the council. He will not take advantage of this until the day he brings in the hand of an enemy he has killed and he is able to testify to his bravery in the presence of all by this striking proof of a daring exploit, yet often carried out by surprise.

[Pp. 535-536, 18 lines of music.] [537]

## III. Consecration of the Chief

766 779 622 a) The ceremony

A tribal chief has died. After the customary lamentation and funeral feast, he has been buried in a temporary grave. Thirty days afterwards the warriors again reassemble for the solemn funeral dance, the fanki. Then the eldest son, surrounded by leading warriors, opens his father's grave, climbs down beside the corpse, and with the consecrated knife detaches the skull, which will soon be added to the skulls of earlier ancestors in the évora biéri. Then the corpse is carefully replaced in the grave, and the totemic sacrifices are completed. We shall go back to these sacrifices when discussing individual mortuary rites. The eldest son or the heir removes the akaméyón or tribal totem, if he has not already done so. He then throws the earth back onto the corpse and everyone helps him in this dismal task, after he has thrown the first handfuls. All these rites belong to the social mortuary ceremonial.

622 779 The new chief returns to the village. Then begins strictly speaking, the totemic rite of consecration, which takes place at night, without any female observers.

Escorted by all the warriors, to the beating of a tom-tom, the chief takes the évora biéri containing the ancestral skulls and carries it into the forest. The ceremony is secret only as regards women; young boys may be present.

1824 778 The box of skulls is put on a sort of platform made of newly cut poles. These must come from a special tree, the éfirfira, and must all be alive and green. A bit of dead wood

779 would lead to a ritual offense. These branches are embedded
778 in the earth; they must also be straight, cut from the actual
622 trunk of the tree and not from a branch; upon these poles stuck into the ground, the chief arranges pieces of bamboo (1) which

[342 124]

1. Bamboo is the usual term given by analogy to the palm stems or raffia used in all Fan building, in place of real bamboo, which is unknown or a recent importation into Gabon.

[284] make a platform. They are tied together, not with the lianas usual for huts, but with lashings [538] made of rattan palm. When that work has been done, the chief places his évora biéri on the upper tier; the other family heads put their bivora bibiér to the right and left in order of precedence. When all the boxes of skulls have been lined up, each man, after having danced and sung around the altar, then approaches it again, opens his box, removes the ancestral skulls, and places them on the lower tier below the boxes. Upon his family skulls he places the family totem, then his own personal totem. There is another series of dances, accompanied by songs. The chief then advances again, alone, and puts the skull of his immediate ancestor above all the others, dances and sings, then puts the skull inside that of the first ancestor. He also takes his family totem, which by the very fact of his birth is the tribal or clan totem, and places it upon the two superimposed skulls, his father's and that of the clan father. Then there begins a special
533 song called the Song of Union. The archaic words are nowadays
622 for the most part very hard to understand, the general meaning,
779 on the other hand, is easy to grasp: it deals with the uniting of all the heads of families in direct line and consists of an invocation to the Spirit of the Race, who has passed down through all descendants from the first ancestor so as to produce a united and indivisible whole. The final words of the song express this idea quite clearly:

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In you the last returns to the first,
The first returns to the last.
And in common accord,
Your breath that does not die reunites them all,
Your breath reunites them without ever wearying.

It makes an unending whole,
And future children, offspring of our race,
Will also be your children, O father!
As I today am your child.

The éfirfira grows and continues to grow.
New branches start from its gnarled trunk,
One after another,
They grow, yet remain always the éfirfira.

In you the last returns to the first,
The first returns to the last. [539]

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A gelded goat or often a gelded dog is then brought to the wooden altar; it is immolated, and the blood is collected in a clay pot. The chief dips a green palm branch in the blood and then puts it on the altar in such a way as to cover both the totems and the ancestral skulls.

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After this first "recognition" comes a second, which consists of a song called "Song of the Visit." The chief sings it, and all the participants repeat the refrain. Thus the Yendun tribe, for instance, the refrain is:

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Bi'ne biboñe bi Ndun,
Bi'ne fogo bisésé biboñe bi Ndun
Ndun a ne Esa bie,
Ndun ve Esa bie bisé.

We are the children of Ndun,
Yes, we are all the children of Ndun,
And Ndun is our father,
Yes, Ndun is the father of us all.

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At the same time, the chief has taken his father's and his first forefather's skulls; he approaches successively the évora biéri of each of the other heads of family and touches their ancestral skulls against those in his hands. He returns to the middle, takes the pot holding the victim's blood, dips his father's de, fly swatter, or into it, and then sprinkles the totems placed near the skulls. He takes his own totem, moves it alongside the clan or tribal totems, fastens them together with a liana and touches them successively against the totems of the other heads of family, while singing the totem song, everyone repeating the refrain after him:

[539]

We are the children of Ndun,
And Ndun is our totem (mvamayõn),
Yes, we are the children of Ndun,
And Ndun is totem for us all.

After this ceremony there are several more dances and songs. Finally at the end, the tribal chief is the first to put the skulls back into the évora biéri, and everyone follows his example. He does the same thing with the totems, again followed by all the others. [540] All the boxes are then carefully put aside in a spot cleared in advance.

[778]

All return to the open space. The rude altar, where the boxes, skulls, and totems had lain, is destroyed; the boxes are all heaped one upon the other; and great care is taken that no drop of the victim's blood that might have fallen on the ground be profaned by any touch at all. As soon as the victim itself has been immolated, it is laid on freshly cut green banana leaves -- it must never touch the ground -- and placed upon a pyre made from the altar wood, which is lighted. This task always falls to the new chief, never the practitioner. As soon as the victim has been cooked enough, it is put back on the banana leaves and cut up by the chief himself into as many pieces as there are persons present. No piece may be left over; no piece may be carried away. That would be a ritual offense of the gravest kind, and the Fan are convinced, or at least appear to be so, that the totem never fails to punish the wrongdoing by actual death of the

779 622 perpetrator. If necessary, the chief would take this upon himself. Such a case has sometimes occurred, according to certain legends.

The large bones are then again placed upon the pyre, for which the necessary wood has been carefully kept, because to cut or to add more is forbidden. When everything has been consumed, the bones and wood that are left in the form of cinders (1) are pulverized as finely as possible, and the chief

[137] 1. Éfirfira is a rather resinous wood, which burns up completely, leaving hardly any cinders.

scatters the powder on the recently covered grave of his father, accompanied by all the heads of family. The banana leaves that had been used to wrap up the victim are carefully folded into a bundle and thrown to the bottom of a spring or stream below the spot where water is usually drawn, so as to avoid profanation.

In contrast to all the other sacrifices, nothing must remain of this victim nor may anyone keep the slightest trace of it.

Before carrying the ashes of the sacrifice to his father's grave, the chief still has to go through another ceremony just as important, the rite of the spear.

779 622 411 The rite of the spear, or better of the assagais, ašume mékôn, the salute to the assagais, only occurs at the enthronement of tribal chiefs and then only if they have come of age, that is, have already been received as warriors bearing the marks or bawu.

779 776 411 171 b) The rite of the spear or the assagais. Ašume mékôn.

From the other side of Africa, Father Van den Burgt, (1)

1. Dictionnaire français-rundi [French-Rundi Dictionary], article, "Kiraña."

of the White Fathers, recently pointed out a curious rite among the Barundi, the rite of the spear, the emblem of Kiraña, the

779 point. At the time of the ceremony the guardian of the spear
776 appears with two assistants; he wears a sort of crown made of a
411 panther skin, part of which hangs down his back. The participants
171 form a semicircle around him, carrying small hollow calabashes filled with hard seeds (2) that rattle. Then a hymn is begun,

> 2. The seeds of the annata tree are used or, even more often, the round hard seeds of canna (canna spec.).

sung in an oddly impressive tone, deeply convincing and creating indescribable melancholy. During this evocation, each one picks up a bit of straw, bows down and presents it to the sacred spear, claps his hands together and asks the spirit dwelling on the spearhead for various favors. He then says: "To thee, Father, I make these demands, I offer my homage." Everyone then leaves the hut singing and goes to the resting place of the ancestral spirits.

779 Among the Fan the salute to the spear thus takes place at
●622 the enthronement of the chief. After the victim has been divided
411 and eaten, the chief rises and plants his assagai in the earth, point
171 upwards; the point has been made to gleam by thorough careful burnishing. The choice of spear is not unimportant: it must have the totemic tribal emblem incised in its hollow and must have already "drunk" enemy blood. The spear is thus planted in the ground so far as possible just where the altar stood; shortly after, at its foot, the chief places his baldrick usually of leopard-skin, holding the materialized totem, the akaméyôn. [543]

Having done this, he circles around the spear, singing, then picks up the baldrick and hangs it upon the lance, which usually has several small sharp hooks at the base.

The chief again circles the spear, sings a hymn in honor of Kindâña, then stands still. All the others then go to fetch their boxes of ancestral skulls and circle around the spear, singing. As each man passes the chief, he bows, puts his box on the ground, and claps his hands.

At the end of the ceremony the chief removes the spear, puts back the baldrick at his side, and takes everything to his hut.

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He then returns to collect the remains of the sacrifice and carry them to his father's grave.

It is evident that the Fan ritual of the spear salute has many analogies to the Rundi ritual, and the same impulse would seem to motivate both.

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c) Rites of initiation and consecration of the chief compared with the religious role of the Pharaoh

In all this it is easy to see a whole embryonic system or rather, as our linguistic research bears out, the vestiges, very corrupt and gradually shriveling away, of a religious system that is very old and goes back to the very beginnings of the race.

The legends, customs, and especially the language make it possible for us to see, with all the reservations necessary to such a hypothesis, a pale reflection, perhaps a decadent reminder, of Egyptian religion.

It would be of great interest in the first place to try to find out if the Fan word denoting "chief," nzue -- from n for agency and zue, to command, to order -- is not related to Egyptian (1) , to pray, adore,

1. There are other resemblances between the two languages, to which I shall refer later: kha (Eg.), crown, and khu (Fg.), chief; khala, a fortified place, and dzal, fortified village (kraal); ka, to leave, and ka, to go away, etc.; ko, hook, and lko, hook, whence akɔ̃ñ, hooked, barbed spear.

sua, to pray, adore, which was originally the chief's main function, or again to Suten, meaning "king," which comes from the word seten [544], to determine by knife, which means "to kill." The king is thus in theory he who slays the sacrificial victim, the sacrificer.

The Pharaoh formerly acted in a general way as a Fan chief still does today, without, one must admit, any of the trappings of majesty -- as I have said, he is a pale reflection.

He used to go himself, at least fictitiously, to capture the victim, a wild bull. He immolated it, cut it up, and offered it to the deity whose son he was. He was not only the sacrificer

171 We find further confirmation of the foregoing in the
174 following lines: "In archaic times, before the unification of Egypt into a single kingdom, it was no doubt the tribal chiefs who, as Pharaoh did later for the entire country, declared war, dispensed justice, and offered the sacrifices." (1)

1. The Life-Work of Sir Peter Le Page Renouf (Paris, 1902-07), Vol. 2, p. 351, "The Priestly Character of the Earliest Egyptian Civilization."

As religious leader the ]Fan] tribal chief can thus delegate his authority only to the practitioner; as totemic chief, only to his direct consanguineal heir.

614 This is true to such a degree that if, for instance, the family should die out, the tribe would not come to an end or be destroyed, for the elders of the clan or of the mother tribe would trace genealogies back to the beginning or source of the race and find a secondary family related more closely to the founder of the race; that secondary family would in turn become the main lineage. This transfer comes about quite naturally, without hitch or conflict, merely by force of circumstances. In some cases, especially with a small clan, families will attach themselves to other clans; again, according to the formative law given earlier, new clans will be created, filials of the mother branch. If a mother clan is involved, then, on the contrary, families will attach themselves more willingly to the filial branch (branch in esa), where they will find the family totem (esamvèn, esamvùn, etc.).

d) Mistakes made by European administration in appointing new tribal chiefs from outside the main lineage

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● 622 Clearly the chief mistake, and hence the lack of success, of civil administrators or military leaders who for one reason or another depose the legitimate chief of a tribe and appoint another is clear from the totemic laws just enumerated and the very structure of the race. I willingly admit that sometimes such depositions and appointments may, and often should be made,

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622 [546] for perfectly legitimate reasons, in the interests of the conquering country and even of the administered peoples. Nevertheless, if European administrators knew more about the customs of the country, (1) as would be very desirable, they

> 1. Especially since the law permits native customs "in so far as they are not contrary to decency and morality."

would not leave themselves open to certain failure and sometimes to humiliating defeat by picking out a man who, though perfectly worthy, cannot be appointed chief according to the laws of the land.

As I myself have seen, it often happens that the legitimate chief, tired of endless trouble, reproaches, and quite justifiable fines, in some way agrees to the new state of affairs, which henceforth relieves him of responsibility and shelters him from the conqueror's laws, ordinances, and capriciousness, or what he takes to be such. Thus, in certain villages, there will be a chief "at the disposal" of Europeans, just as there are certain women, always supposedly virgins, at their disposal. Actually, these chiefs will have only factitious authority, dependent entirely upon the power of the white man. They will also be in constant danger of being poisoned or of disappearing in more or less occult fashion. They are obeyed out of fear, but only in matters that have to do with government, such as forced labor, requisitioned foodstuffs, auxiliary workers, and hardly mentionable favors, but as concerns everything else, their authority is nil, not only in fact but in principle. How, for instance, could they, when there is danger to clan or tribe, invoke a general totem which is not theirs and of which they are neither representatives nor custodians?

Thus we can see the source of the mistake of European administrations, who are very little concerned anyhow with the ideas underlying the indigenous structure and hence the very existence of the tribe, and who want to give it a code made up for Europeans, an impossible task. To apply the Napoleonic

648 Code to indigenous tribes, as has been decreed in Gabon, is one
● 622 of those governmental aberrations that reveals as profound an ignorance as possible of the people to be governed and the principles of government. [547]

For the same reasons, one can understand how impossible it is to elect a chief outside the established rules of succession. A chief appointed from outside the main lineage has not, and cannot have, authority.

e) Change of clan totem

779 When, for the above reasons, authority have passed to
622 another clan family, the public cult remains the same. But it
644 must be emphasized as of the greatest importance that the ancestral totem disappears, since it has no longer an eponymous representative of its own blood. It will be replaced by the family totem of the new chief, which then becomes the totem for the whole tribe or clan. Far from being hypothetical, this is, on the contrary, a repeated occurrence, of which the following is a typical illustration.

A certain Mba-Alame, of the Yebiken or Banana clan, left the tribe after a dispute with his clan chief and went to establish a village on a hill facing his old village. While remaining on fairly good terms with the people of his former clan, his first concern was to create a new family of his own and to cut himself off distinctly from his former companions. He therefore changed his name and took another, which happened to be Nzoge Nze, Elephant-son-of the Panther. The panther became his new totem and from then on, that of his sons and of the future clan. He was in the full sense of the term, the new father of the tribe, able to say more justifiably than Marshal Lefebevre once did: "We are the forefathers!"

In order to undertake this sort of action, a man must have a very resolute character, capable of breaking with his kin, friends, and clan without fearing the always fatal reprisals.

Moreover, such a happening is only possible if the tribe is small enough, because in a large tribe the chief would be very

unlikely to allow such a flouting of his authority. It is also feasible if the chief is old and feeble, and the rebel held in awe for his physical strength and especially his notorious bad temper, based on substantial proof. Also the "deserter" or "uprooted" man must not belong to any secret "clan" society, because the initiates never pardon [548] desertion, this is a primary and always inviolable law.

And that is not all. It is imperative for the new founder to find a willing totem. The choice cannot be at random, as some people may imagine, and there must be a series of sacrifices during which the chosen animal indicates its acceptance. In such a case, the personal totem will receive this honor, for it cannot be changed and not to select it would be a gross insult that would unfailingly lead to significant revenge. But the personal totem must agree to become the tribal totem. In so doing, the spirit -- much more intelligent than man -- knows that it is agreeing to become his actual and titular guardian and it is not always anxious to do so. In similar circumstances, Nzoge Nze admitted to me one day that before finally acquiring an accepting totem he had had to wait for several months and to sacrifice a good many fowls and even kids. The practitioner also had to be satisfied.

It should be observed that following this acceptance all panthers did not become Nzoge Nze's totems, but only those who inhabited the country and were the offspring or descendants of his nze or particular totem panther. This proves the truth of our system. Furthermore, these panthers were sacred only to Nzoge Nze, for each particular totem is particular only to its owner, not to his next of kin. Thus, one of Nze's sons had the anteater, avil, for a totem: he was therefore not supposed to eat it, although his brothers and sons did so with impunity. But once Nzoge Nze's totem, nze, becomes the family and, therefore the tribal totem, his children will avoid killing any panther, on the chance that one might be related to that nze. However, should they happen to kill and eat one, the offense would be only hypothetical and before expiating it, they would make the

779 necessary investigation by sacrifices. And the totem, under
622 penalty of not receiving any expiation, should reveal its rela-
614 tionship. But as Nzoge Nze becomes more of a remote ancestor, the risk of relationship with every panther grows, for each panther may be related to the eponymous ancestor and consequently the law becomes more stringent. Should a panther enter villages and kill a few innocent people, [549] such as women and children, the men of the eponymous clan would be permitted to kill it, and only in such a case, but they would still be forbidden to eat it. When after a series of sacrifices for this purpose, it has been duly established that revenge for some unexpiated totemic offense is not involved, that is proof that the panther in question does not belong to the eponymous panther clan. It is a "foreigner" or "deserter", the latter being quite common in certain animal species, one of whose members may leave the group to go off on his own and become a "solitary," as do elephants, panthers, wild boars, gorillas. It is then perfectly lawful to attack it and kill it if possible. A trifling ritual expiation will suffice, proportionate to the very small likelihood of having killed an ally, an extremely slight probability, since actions are never taken without previous assent of the totem chief of the tribe. The responsibility will be his in case of mistake.

## IV. War and Palavers

511 Life is easy for the Fan.

Close to his village, the great forest begins; it abounds in game, and he has not far to go to be able to shoot, at point-blank range, monkeys, antelopes, wild boars, even elephants. There are innumerable streams and rivers swarming with fish, especially carp; traps, weirs, nets, everything is good to catch them with -- everything succeeds. A Fan hunts and fishes when he feels like it; there are no laws interfering with his inclinations. Banana and manioc plantations, which provide the basic subsistence, give hardly any trouble. At the start of each season there are a few days of work at slashing-and-burning, the ashes providing fertilizer. After that, all the labor and care of the crops falls
517 upon the women. The Fan is therefore idle most of the day and

608 rites completed, the two men become truly blood brothers, ndugu among the Swahili of the east coast, ndégo among the Mpongwe of the equator, angom among our Fan; these represent the same word, with the same root, the different forms resulting from differences in dialect.

608 Still, two conditions are necessary to blood exchange: in the first place, a real operation is performed. Only chiefs make this exchange, and believe themselves to be completely bound and, if need be, ready to give their lives for their blood brothers. They are thus in a position to exact reciprocity. Only the chiefs, as we have said, make blood brothers; for they alone are representatives of their race and guardians of the totem, consequently masters of the intrinsic virtue and strength of the tribe. Anyone other than the chief is therefore disqualified, [567] and the chief himself cannot appoint a delegate to take his place. Nevertheless, this does happen from time to time! A white man who chances by, perhaps an explorer, anxious to obtain the good will of an influential chief, or often a trader pursuing his business, may ask a chief to make him a "blood brother." The chief sees his own advantage here and readily agrees, knowing perfectly well that he is certain to receive many presents. The ceremony takes place, but the white man, who believes that he has gained his ends, is really very naive, for in most cases the chief will have appointed a deputy and the rite means nothing legally.

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However, a chief does sometimes go through the ceremony himself but in that case the basic rites are abbreviated, often omitted. An African knows too well what he is undertaking and has no desire for a white blood brother. Yet in certain circumstances, and well aware of what he is doing, an African chief does really make a blood brother. Thus, for instance, a chief of Kilimanjaro, named Tumba, is blood brother to Mgr. Le Roy, (1) who has left us an interesting and thorough account

1. Voyage au Kilima-Ndjaro [Journey to Kilimanjaro] by Mgr. Le Roy; Mame, Tours. See also Ann. Prop. Foi. 1882,

7: Trilles--109 M-5 (1893-1912) 1912 FH9 Fang FH9
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p. 369 ff. [Annuaire de la Propagation de la Foi, Yearbook of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith].

of the ceremony and associated ritual.

The second condition is that the parties concerned be of different tribes and not have the same totem. This condition is essential and proceeds from the very nature of totemism.

The process of blood alliance or blood exchange is rather curious. Among the Fan it is as follows and is found in precisely the same form in several Congo tribes somewhat related to the Fan, like the Wabuyu of the Upper Congo.

[171]

One of my mission colleagues recently described it thus: (1)

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1. Bulletin des Pères Blancs d'Anvers [Bulletin of the White Fathers of Antwerp], n° de mai [May] 1910.

"In the evening there is a loud beating of drums; several rifle shots followed by shouts of joy announce a festival. Urged by curiosity, I went in the direction of the noise and discovered that two chiefs were to effect a blood exchange that day. They came forward solemnly . . . the participants crowded around and let out bloodcurdling howls. The protagonists solemnly sit down on special seats [568], face to face, with their knees touching. A white cloth is thrown over them, and the ceremony begins.

"The minister [practitioner] of one of the chiefs of the village where I am stationed takes a small thin knife and makes an incision in the leg of the foreign chief, while the latter's minister does the same to the village chief. Each one spreads on a leaf a paste that looks like butter, and simultaneously both ministers rub the two incisions. They keep exchanging the leaves so that their masters' blood is thoroughly mixed, the better to seal the mutual friendship.

"At the same time ivory horns are sounded and drums beat martial airs, rather unreasonably, it seems to me, at a 'peace conference.' The music arouses angry passions in the

B 608 622 535

songs celebrating the achievements of the tribe's forefathers and teaching contempt for death.

"Then comes the feast, from which women are strictly excluded."

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A ceremony identical to that of the Wabuyu is found among the Ozɛm Fan, which I have seen several times, and is almost the same among the Dzandzama and Bakélé.

F 171

It is rather strange to find almost the same customs among the most ancient peoples. For instance, Herodotus wrote of the Scythians: "This is how the Scythians used to take an oath: they would pour wine into a large earthenware cup, and the parties to the oath would add their blood from slight cuts made on their bodies with knife or sword; a boar-spear, an axe, and a lance would then be dipped into the cup. They then recited long prayers and drank from the cup. The leading members of the court would drink after them." (1)

1. Herodotus, Book IV, Ch. 70.

F 779

Blood alliance is the last general totemic rite that we have to deal with. Next come particular rites. The totem usually plays a far less important part in these than in general rites, and we shall therefore be much less concerned with them. [570]

## Chapter XVI

## The Totem in Fan Life: Particular Rites

Summary:

1. Birth.
2. Adoption.
3. Marriage.
4. Hunting, fishing, husbandry.
5. Trade and palavers.
6. Diseases and death. The funeral dance and the fanki.

8: Bennett D-5 , (ca. 1898) 1899 FH9 Fang FH9



clothing. The Fang do not use any coverings to protect the feet. Rank is not distinguished by the dress, very often the brightest and cleanest wrappers are worn by the young men while the *kuma* (headman) is often clothed in a dirty old rag. Very often the *kuma* wears an imported straw or felt hat obtained in trade, and this alone distinguishes him as headman of the town. Next to the possession of women and guns, a Fang man's great desire is to own "much cloth."

*Personal Ornaments.*

*Head.*—The Fang dress their hair in the same manner as the Bulu, and the way they build it up on the head over wooden shapes is often very remarkable and shows considerable skill. Very often the hair is built up over these shapes in ridges, the upper edge of the ridge having white shirt buttons fastened along it or brass headed tacks driven in. Wigs are used and very skilfully made. Very often the term wig would be a misnomer, for the ingenious contrivance made to fit over the bald head is often entirely devoid of hair, being simply a close-fitting skull cap knitted with string made from the pineapple fibre. The wigs are usually decorated with shirt buttons or imported glass beads. The hair is frequently plaited and twisted into ringlets by both sexes; dyeing the hair is not practised. Beads and white shirt buttons are worn on the hair in large quantities, also large cowrie shells dyed with red wood powder. The beads and buttons are often sewed on pieces of goat or deer skin, a separate portion decorating each side of the head, connected by a string of beads passing across the forehead.

Moustaches are seldom cultivated, beards when worn are allowed to grow naturally; but both are frequently removed by depilation; shaving is not practised. Ornaments are frequently worn in the ears, and are usually suspended by a small cord passed through a hole in the lobe. Women and young girls when returning from work in the forest or gardens frequently cluster grasses, leaves of vines and fragrant herbs around their ears; it is a rather pretty custom. Certain fetish charms are worn suspended from the ear; women frequently use for an ear fetish the small quills from a porcupine's tail, and they say it will bring them children. Brass and iron ear-rings are also worn.

Males do not seem to feel inclined to ornament the nose, but many Fang women delight to do so. They pierce the triangular cartilage with a long slender bamboo pin: the pins sometimes project out three inches on either side of the nose. Very often a medium-sized porcupine quill is used as the ornament, in place of bamboo; it certainly looks better. Some women thus decorated look very repulsive. A female who is credited with considerable power as a medicine woman will almost invariably have the nose pierced and decorated. Ornaments are not worn on the lips or cheeks.

*Body.*—Men, women, and children wear necklaces of glass beads, the hoofs of very small antelope, and certain forest beans, are strung and worn around the neck. Bristles from the tail of an elephant are used for the same purpose. When

8: Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 FH9 Fang FH9



## X.—*Food. Cooking.*

Food used by the Fang is precisely similar to that of all other tribes inhabiting the great zone of palms and bananas as described by Humboldt. Added to these ordinary foods of the Fang is their liking for human flesh, indulged in to this day in spite of the law, which is often powerless to reach and punish the offenders. Cassava, *mbòe*, plantains, *bikon*, crushed gourd seeds, *ngongon*, corn; *mekobe*, a most nutritive tuber, sweet potatoes, yams, palm oil, bananas, snails and various mollusca. Fish is wrapped in plantain leaves and boiled, or set on hot ashes and fire piled on top of the *bundle* of food. All kinds of meat is eaten, from deer down to the smallest bush rat; snakes are considered very good meat. No portion is wasted, every morsel of skin and intestines are eaten. Goats and chickens are raised for food and trade. Corn or other cereals are not used for the purpose of making bread. Milk is not used. Preparations of milk such as butter and cheese are not made. There is a marked preference for meats. When an animal is slaughtered, women bring wooden bowls to collect the blood in. The blood is often cooked mixed with palm oil. A Fang will eat almost any kind of known food and at any time, providing it is not his *Ekì* or taboo, given him during infancy, prohibiting the eating of a certain kind of food, unless partaken of under certain conditions. Except for the *Ekì* men, women and children partake of the same food. The Fang are improvident. When on long journeys they often chew a piece of Kola nut, but more commonly chew pieces of a certain root; it has several different names. Palm oil is extensively used in cooking. Salt (*nkù*) is much enjoyed and sought after in trade. Sugar is only used in the form of sugar cane and eaten uncooked. The chiefs, or rather headmen, have no special form of food. Eating earth is not indulged in. So far as I am aware, all fish, flesh and fowl is cooked before being eaten. Flesh is often extremely high, at times positively bad, before it is eaten, but not one morsel is ever wasted.

Fish, fowl, bush rats, snakes and all kinds of meats are smoked or sun-dried; food prepared thus is carried on journeys in the bush wrapped in leaves and eaten with *mboa* (cassava) without any further preparation. Permanent ovens for baking are not in use. Meat is roasted on small spits over the log fire or wrapped up in leaves and hot ashes banked around and on top of it. Native vegetables are frequently cooked with meats, plantains are usually boiled separately or roasted close to the fire. Most cooking utensils used by the Fang near the coast are iron or brass pots, imported by white traders; but farther inland the native pots are much more in vogue. These native pots are made of grey clay and sun-dried; they become harder and stronger by use, and vary in size and capacity from a pint to about three gallons.

Cooking vessels are not kept very clean, being simply rinsed out with a little water; but if the vessel is a brass trade pot or kettle, it is usually taken to the river or a near stream, and scoured bright; but I fear the chief reason for doing

8: Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 FH9 Fang FH9



832 584 583 gives him (the father) the *beki* (dowry). The father of the young virgin takes the goods to his town; the young man remains in possession of the woman.

They marry with *biang-ndoma*, eloping medicine thus.

This is *Biang-ndoma*.

721 789 *Biang-akong* (war medicine).—Told me by Fam-deu, a Fang, Esisîs clan, at Foulabifong, Nkomo river, April 19th, 1898. This *biang* was illustrated to me; a leopard tooth is the *Biang-akong*.

Make a bowl of war medicine, of leaves, roots, and bark. Call all people of the town. Drop the leopard tooth into the medicine. If the point of the tooth *looks* toward the people we have a palaver (trouble) with, then we must go and fight and we will win. If the root of the tooth points toward the people we have a palaver with, then we must *tabe si* (sit down) or our enemies will win if we go to fight them.

This is the *Biang-akong*.

789 619 622 *Biang-akamayong*.—This *biang* is the protector of the tribe or nation (*ayông*, tribe).

Told me by Esôya-ôvum, the headman of Foulabifong on the Nkomo river, who sold me the complete set of the *Biang-akamayong* belonging to the dead headman "Commisan." I present this *biang* for your inspection this evening. The tin canister was obtained from a white man and is used in place of the usual basket to carry bones in. It contains portions of the skull of an albino (male), portions of the skull of a *mon nguri*, young chimpanzee, red powder and a variety of native medicine.

[726] [534] This *biang-akamayong* is always carried by the headman of a town during war.

A bell hangs from the bottom of the canister containing the bones; it rings when the headman walks.

*Nko.*—The small horn belonging to the *biang-akamayong* has *ngom* (porcupine tail) in it, also native medicine. It is used to cure people having witches. A bowl of medicine is made. The *ngom* is dipped in the medicine bowl and the sick person sprinkled with the medicine. Then the witch departs.

At this point the headman Esôya stopped talking. He said, "The children who have gathered around your house must go away; no real man dare talk about the *biang-akamayong* before women and children." I told the children to go and Esôya continued.

*The whistle.*—This is part of the *biang-akamayong*; it has been cooked (boiled) in the medicine bowl and has great power when used by the headman in calling the men together after a fight.

789 619 *Mouth.*—This is the large horn with a piece of looking glass on top. This horn contains much medicine, and next to the bones is the most important part of the *biang-akamayong*.

The two small antelope horns, and the small bundles of medicine, are *biang e soli* (hiding medicine); it makes the person carrying the *biang-akamayong* invisible to the enemy.